THE FIFTH DAY.

29th February, 1924.

The Assembly met at 12-30 P. M. on Friday, the 29th February, 1924.

Rao Bahadur R. Viraraghava Aiyangar, B. A., B. L., Officer in charge of the Administration, presided.

45. Suggestions for increasing the output of food-stuffs.

Mr. M. V. Mathew B. A. (Member, Nominated) said that Travancore was rich in the free gifts of nature, *viz.*, earth and water, and that by an intelligent use of those gifts, this country like England, might be transformed into a paradise. He suggested the establishment of an Irrigation and Drainage Commission for the whole of Travancore to act in co-operation with such departments as were directly or indirectly concerned in the production of food-stuffs. The member said that such a measure would go a long way towards transforming the immense swampy areas of the country into fertile lands. He next suggested the development of irrigation and cheap power. He also urged that new methods should be discovered for the development of extensive and intensive cultivation in the State.

The Member then passed on to the Agricultural Department. He drew the attention of the Government to the extensive waste lands and *kari* lands in Vaikam, Ambalapuzha and other taluks and suggested that the Government might encourage the cultivation of such lands by securing for them the services of experts trained in soil bacteriology, agricultural chemistry and allied subjects and by lowering the rates of land tax and *taravila*. The member also suggested that Experimental Farms be increased both in number and variety. While on that topic, he pointed out the desirability of opening farms for root crops, especially for tapioca which ranked next to paddy as staple food. In regard to increasing the number of farms, the Member said that more farms of an extent of 30 acres each might be conveniently opened on the large waste lands in Vetchur, Ambalapuzha, Chempil and other places. He also suggested the desirability of hastening the land colonisation scheme as far as possible.

The Member concluded with a request to the President to convey to His Highness the Maha Raja the jubilation of the Catholic community on the joyful event referred to in the first paragraph of the Dewan's Address.

President's reply.—With reference to the birth of a Princess to Her Highness the Senior Ranee, it will give me great pleasure to convey to His Highness the Maha Raja the sentiments expressed by you on the joyful event.

Your suggestions on certain general subjects such as the appointment of an Irrigation and Drainage Commission for Travancore to act in co-operation with the Public Works and other connected departments will be referred to the Economic Development Board which deals with similar questions.

As regards the suggestion to increase the Experimental Farms in number and in variety, I may say that Government have already recognised its necessity. Government have ordered the investigation of the *kari* lands, and the Assistant Agricultural Chemist has been deputed for a course of training in soil bacteriology in the Agricultural Institute at Pusa. After his return, it is proposed to open one or two experimental stations at Ambalapuzha and Vaikam where there are extensive areas of *kari* lands and to conduct systematic investigation on the successful cultivation of such lands. Till then we shall have to wait.

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